

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Upcoming training opportunities for Regional and State Clean Watersheds Needs Survey (CWNS) Coordinators to prepare for CWNS 2008

FROM: Sheila E. Frace, Director
Municipal Support Division

DATE: August 1, 2007

TO: Environmental Council of the States Commissioners

I am very pleased to inform you that we are making good progress in preparing for the 2008 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey (CWNS). Thanks to the efforts of the many States participating in the CWNS 2008 Workgroup and Subcommittees, the 2008 survey will include many improvements over prior surveys. These improvements should make State data entry easier and improve the utility of the survey for state and national policy purposes. In order for your State to fully benefit from these enhancements, I encourage you to have your State CWNS coordinator participate in upcoming training opportunities to prepare for the new survey.

CWNS 2008 Enhancements

The CWNS 2008 design includes a new web-based data entry system. This system makes State data entry easier by integrating CWNS with other Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) data, including National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) data. It allows local users and State field office users to submit CWNS data to their State coordinator electronically. It provides improved cost curves for onsite and decentralized wastewater treatment system needs and new pipe and pipe replacement needs. In addition, improved needs review and documentation procedures will reduce States' efforts in the data review process and will maximize States' ability to correct data and document submissions.

Training Opportunities

By participating in upcoming training opportunities, State CWNS coordinators will learn about the survey enhancements and be well prepared for data collection currently scheduled from January through October 2008.

Over the next four months, EPA will present a series of web seminars focusing on needs eligibility rules, documentation requirements, and best practices for entering program specific needs (e.g. stormwater management, nonpoint source pollution prevention). Participation in these web seminars is free and provides an excellent opportunity for your staff to learn about the new system with sufficient lead time to be most effective.

In addition to the web seminars, we are planning the CWNS 2008 Kickoff Meeting for January 16-18, 2008 in San Diego, California. This meeting will include two days of detailed hands-on training for the new data entry system, as well as additional training on eligibility and documentation requirements. Past participants have found this an excellent opportunity for interactive learning. They have benefited from the opportunity to network and share “best practices” with their colleagues in other States.

I hope that you will support your staff’s participation in the web seminars and the CWNS 2008 Kick-off Meeting. Together, we can make this new survey the most useful of its kind. We look forward to continued cooperation with your department in preparing for and conducting the CWNS 2008. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Michael Plastino at (202) 564-0682 or cwns@epa.gov.